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War, What Is It Good For?

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Within the last five years, thousands of chiropractic and medical physicians have added acupuncture into their practices. Many more are doing so each week. The chiropractic profession has incorporated acupuncture as part of its practice since the first acupuncture certification program was offered in 1973 by the Columbia Institute of Chiropractic, now New York Chiropractic College. This program was followed shortly by National College of Chiropractic, Logan College of Chiropractic and Texas College of Chiropractic.

Today, even more chiropractic colleges offer graduate school certification programs in acupuncture/meridian therapy, including Cleveland Chiropractic College, Northwestern Chiropractic College, Parker College of Chiropractic and Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College. Even Life College has a significant presence in Beijing at the Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Some in the medical profession seem to be adopting the practice of acupuncture as their own, now that they have developed this newfound interest in "alternative" medicine. The interest and adoption of acupuncture by some MDs can be traced to the public's interest in natural therapy.

Acupuncturists have become licensed in approximately 39 states. They want full domain over acupuncture and have little if any regard for the chiropractic or medical physicians who have incorporated the principles of acupuncture into their practices. The "turf" wars are beginning.

Even though American chiropractors have conducted certification programs in acupuncture for more than a decade prior to the establishment of the first acupuncture schools in the U.S., the acupuncturists have become increasingly vocal, accusing the DCs of being unqualified to perform acupuncture. The whole matter is an unfortunately one of philosophy: "straights" versus "mixers."

Most DCs or MDs do not want to give up their practices and become an acupuncturist. They simply want to add the principles and procedures of acupuncture into their practices.

Even though the accusations of the three-year acupuncture school graduate are inaccurate that doctors of medicine and doctors of chiropractic do not possess the necessary academic training to perform acupuncture. This is just the "My school is better than your school" mentality. MDs, DCs, acupuncturists and other health professionals need to accept our diverse cultures. We all have something significant and unique to offer. It's physically impossible for the current number of acupuncture practitioners to treat all the patients who have expressed an interest in the various forms of acupuncture which are practiced in North America.

Health professionals are jockeying for the number one position in acupuncture. MDs are placing ads in newspapers and local magazines saying, "Acupuncture performed by an MD is better because patients receive better treatment options, less chance of missing a diagnosis, and will be paid for by insurance." DCs have had acupuncture as part of their practice, the exception being those states where the leadership has tunnel vision and is unable to see the future.

The acupuncturists want acupuncture exclusively and say it is theirs alone. The general attitude is that everyone other than an acupuncturist is unqualified to perform it because they didn't go to a three-year school to repeat more than half of the topics they already took in school.

There is no easy resolve to this matter. Unfortunately, like the fighting which has occurred in chiropractic for over 100 years, the same has already begun in acupuncture. There will be wars over semantics, techniques, principles and philosophies. No one will win. Everyone will be frustrated, and no one will care except the soldiers who fight the war.

I constantly receive mail from acupuncturists who want to pick a fight, primarily because I am a doctor of chiropractic who utilizes and teaches acupuncture. They always want to know my qualifications and what acupuncture school I attended. They criticize my dozen trips to the People's Republic of China, saying that they weren't "serious" trips.

During the 5,000-year history of acupuncture, the knowledge has always gone from the master to the student. Acupuncture school as we know it in this country is something which just developed in the mid-1980s, with the exception of one which created a branch from a school operating in Cambridge,

England. I've been fighting for chiropractic for over 33 years, including my time in college. The last thing I want to do now is fight over who has the right to use acupuncture, especially since we have used it for 26 years.

In the January 1999 issue of *Health* magazine, on newsstands everywhere, an article specifically said "to avoid" chiropractors who are not certified by the National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. It said that in some states like Colorado, chiropractors can become licensed to practice acupuncture after completing only 100 hours of course work, which is well below the requirements for certified acupuncturists or members of the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture.

In the paragraph preceding this warning, it states: "One way you can assure competence is by selecting one of the approximately 1,500 members of the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture. Members must spend a minimum of 200 hours in school learning the craft." What was not said was that the 200 hours of instruction consists of a kick off three-day seminar and then a home video program, which is viewed over a period of six months. If you don't believe it, check out their web page. Of course, keep in mind that *Health* magazine stated the chiropractors' 100 hours of instruction is "well below" their 200 hours.

Perhaps the DCs should just get their training from the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture, then we would be considered "competent." There's only one problem: doctors of chiropractic are not allowed to attend. This country club is for MDs and DOs only: no riffraff allowed.

The International Academy of Medical Acupuncture, which teaches the fine art of contemporary clinical acupuncture with no restriction on what type of doctor may attend, currently conducts a 200-hour certification program in acupuncture in Virginia as per the Virginia Board of Medical Examiners. Unfortunately, the doctor of chiropractic must attend 14 separate 14.5-hour seminars over a period of one year with all the expense attached to it. However, had the DC decided instead to have become an MD, then they could have watched a video program at their leisure in the comfort of their home instead of traveling to Richmond every three weeks. Please understand that only a few states have requirements for the use of acupuncture by MDs. At least DCs have self-administered requirements in most states allowing them to practice, provided they have taken class work in acupuncture through a CCE-accredited school.

If that wasn't enough, the January/February issue of *Health* told this horror story. "One Colorado woman almost gave up on acupuncture after 10 treatments from a chiropractor failed to ease her persistent neck pain. But after just three sessions with a licensed acupuncturist, her condition improved dramatically," says

Steven Bratman, a Fort Collins physician and author of *The Alternative Medicine Ratings Guide*. "It wasn't the wrong therapy but the wrong practitioner," says Bratman. "The first man is an excellent chiropractor, but he's not qualified to do acupuncture."

I think I should send Dr. Bratman the hundreds of doctors' 25 case studies, which is required for fellowship status in the International Academy of Medical Acupuncture following the didactic and clinical requirements. After reviewing thousands of case studies showing incredible responses with the use of acupuncture performed by doctors of chiropractic, I wonder if that would give him a different insight. Yeah, right!

However, despite the slanderous statements, and despite the personal and professional attacks upon the chiropractic profession from members of the acupuncture community, in addition to the continued attacks by medical practitioners who want it all, philosophically speaking, there could be peace. On April 6, 1997, distinguished participants of the National Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Alliance developed a declaration of principles which consists of fundamental principles to help advance the interests of consumers, practitioners and others in the field of acupuncture and oriental medicine and the general health of society. This declaration of principles would be referred to as the "Seattle" *statement*. The text of Seattle have my fullest endorsement, and that of the International Academy of Medical Acupuncture.

If all practitioners of acupuncture would adopt this declaration as proposed, this world and the wonderful healing consciousness we as healers possess could certainly be used to its maximum. Wouldn't it be great to focus our healing energy on the patient instead of constantly having to defend yourself, your profession and your honor? I think the following is something of extreme value. I'm willing. What do you think the profession which created this will do? Let's watch and see. I am particularly interested in items 1, 2 and 3.

The Seattle Statement

We believe that acupuncture and oriental medicine best serves society when practiced with the following principles:

1. Respect the broad diversity of acupuncture and oriental medicine.
2. Encourage collaboration between acupuncture and oriental medicine and other individuals and groups within and outside of organized health care systems.
3. Honor the legacy of acupuncture and oriental medicine, its masters, artisans, and others who created and nurtured that legacy, and contemporary colleagues, collaborators and peers who carry on the legacy.
4. Recognize the energetic basis and respect the dynamic, evolving nature of acupuncture and oriental medicine.
5. Place the healing relationship and the well-being of the individual consumer at the center of acupuncture and oriental medicine practice.
6. Recognize that the social, cultural and physical environment, including race, gender, age, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation, affect the health and healing of the individual.
7. Provide tools and guidance for individuals to reach their own capacity for informed choice, self-healing and living fully, in the presence of health, illness or in the process of dying.
8. Maintain independence of practice based on appropriate standards of education, certification and care.
9. Recognize that maximum accessibility to health care is essential to individual and social well being.
10. Promote public awareness of the facets and traditions of acupuncture and oriental medicine and their integration into personal, social and cultural life.
11. Recognize the need for continual expansion of human understanding through research, analysis and practical experience focused on the interactions among body, mind, spirit, emotions and faith of the individual, society and nature as a whole.

We embrace these principles as fundamental to acupuncture and oriental medicine as a healing art.

Endorsed by: (signature) _____

(printed) _____

Address: _____

Member, International Academy of Medical Acupuncture Yes ____ No ____

To receive a copy of the Seattle statement suitable for framing, and to register your endorsement, please mail a copy of the Seattle statement plus signature endorsement to:

National Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Alliance
14637 Starr Road SE
Olaalla, WA 98359

Best wishes to you in 1999, the year of the rabbit.

Click [here](#) for more information about John Amaro, LAc, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM), FIAMA, DC.



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